Crumbling Forts

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Crumbling Forts

by ira_agni

Summary

Will and Hannibal meet over their sons building a sandcastle together, yet Hannibal is far from the perfect gentleman the detective sees in him.

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The first chapter was originally written for the 'Horny Hannigram Pool Party' hashtag on Twitter. Then these two husbands in the making took their story and ran with it, and I've been trying to keep up.

Important note: The tags concerning the harm of children apply to a scene in which they are briefly mentioned within the context of Will working on a case and details are not elaborated upon, neither do these warnings in any way apply to Adam or Clarence. The chapter containing this scene is appropriately marked with a trigger warning in the chapter notes.

Chapter 1

Hannibal smiled as he let his watchful eyes wander away from his son, beyond the point where he sat playing in the sand, over to the handsome stranger with the dark, curly hair and the big smile, aiding his own little one in navigating the waves down by the water.

Hannibal could see a few scars on the thirty-something man's body, now that his tan had made the pale skin even more visible, and he wondered about the circumstances of the man's acquisition of them. He highly doubted, however, that he had obtained them in the same way Hannibal had come to his own.

A smile tugged at the corners of his mouth as he watched how gently, how lovingly the man played with his toddler, enjoying the beautiful, sunny day at the beach with no other family of theirs in sight.

Finally, the man turned enough for Hannibal to see his other hand, yet that, too, was vacant of a wedding band, as much as was Hannibal's.

The handsome stranger was becoming increasingly interesting, as was his son, who now curiously, yet apprehensively approached the place in which Clarence sat in the sand, building his castle.

"Do you wanna say hi, Adam?" the stranger smiled encouragingly, patiently awaiting his son's reaction, whether he wanted to approach the other child further or move away from him.

Adam, who Hannibal noted had definitely inherited the big, blue eyes of his father, along with the dark curls that peaked out from underneath the tiny sun hat, made a few steps towards Clarence, watching him use his sand moulds with great attention.

Clarence made sure to pack his starfish-shaped mould with even greater precision under Adam's watchful eyes, happily explaining away his process of the great, mighty castle he was going to build.

Finally, checking the whereabouts of Clarence's guardian, Adam's father now turned his head away from his young child, smiling as Hannibal offered a greeting hand gesture.

Hannibal rose from his chair in the shade, his long forgotten book and pen for annotations left behind as he walked over to the small gathering, greeting the newcomers with a smile.

"A beautiful day for building big sand castles, isn't it?"

The other man laughed and rose from his squatted position next to his son.

"Yeah, I was never really good at that… They all just looked like crumbling forts…"

Hannibal chuckled softly, taking in the beautiful, handsome features of the other man's face up close as he looked down, observing as his son picked up one of the plastic moulds, slowly but surely filling it with sand, mimicking Clarence's actions.

"He's really the one with the attention to detail between the two of us…"

"I'm sure you excel in other things, then."

The rosy hue on the stranger's cheeks became a bit darker as he laughed, flattered and caught off guard, and his reaction was enough for Hannibal to become more reassured in his advances.

"The boys seem to be quite busy. Would you like to join me in the shade?"

The stranger looked back at Adam, making sure he was comfortable and engaged in playing with his new friend, before he followed Hannibal to the relaxing shade the large sun umbrella provided only a few feet away.

Hannibal offered Clarence's empty seat to him, before handing him a cold bottle of water from their cooler.

"Did you know I was coming today?" the stranger laughed, gratefully accepting the bottle before taking a sip. "You sure like to be prepared, don't you…?"

"Hannibal", Hannibal offered with a smile, before nodding over to their children. "And that over there is Clarence."

"Will," the stranger replied, comfortably stretching his legs, toes buried in the sand, "And Adam."

"Here by yourself, then? Just you and him?"

"No wife, in case that's what you're asking…" Will replied simply, yet with some tension, gaze fixed on the horizon. "What about you?"

Hannibal gently shook his head, finding sympathy in Will's gaze as he looked at him again.

He could see the questions on his mind, yet also the restraint that kept him from verbalising them.

Whatever had happened, it had probably occurred much more recently than Hannibal's own divorce.

For a moment, he could feel Will's gaze on his body, lingering more patiently than Hannibal was used to from other men.

Straight men, that was.

"No girlfriend or boyfriend either, in case you were wondering."

“I wasn’t-”

Will laughed shyly, averting his gaze, trying not to let Hannibal see how caught and exposed he felt.

God, the last time he had had a relaxing, joyful adult conversation had been way too long ago, especially with someone as handsome as the hospitable man next to him.

He sighed, furrowing his brows as if he was already regretting the words as soon as they left his lips.

“Would you be opposed to it? Me being interested in that?”

“Not at all,” Hannibal replied calmly, enjoying the way Will slowly sought his gaze again, meeting his eyes with a smile of genuine interest.

“You’re too good to be true, aren’t you, Hannibal? Handsome, caring, single… where’s the catch?”

Hannibal smirked softly, voice unwavering.

“I’m a serial killer.”

Will looked confused, then let out a laugh, shaking his head as he took another sip from his water.

“Sorry, but you’ll have to come up with something more creative than that… You have no idea how often I get that stupid joke as soon as people find out I work in homicide…”

“And would those jokes be made in relation to you putting handcuffs on said people?”

Will coughed as some of the water went down the wrong pipe, then shrugged it off with a smile.

He watched as Adam got up on his feet, ready to run off down to the water again, to the soothing rhythm of the waves.

Will quickly leaned over Hannibal, grabbed the pen that lay atop his book and hastily, yet confidently left a string of numbers on Hannibal’s skin, marking him with his phone number before he would leave to enjoy the cooling waves with his son.

“I have to put Adam to bed for his afternoon nap soon…”

Will looked up at Hannibal, former shyness and bashfulness replaced by a smooth, strong sense of confidence in his own abilities.

“If you’re still curious about those cuffs, Hannibal, you’ll have to give me a call some other time…”

Chapter 2

Will slowly and silently pulled the bedroom door ajar behind himself, double-checking the baby monitor in his hand again before he walked over to Hannibal in the living room, joining him on the sofa.

“Thanks,” Will smiled, setting down the baby monitor on the coffee table and accepting the glass of wine Hannibal offered him in return. “And thank you for letting us stay here with you.”

“I know the change might be difficult for Adam, so please do not hesitate to return to your own hotel room if need be,” Hannibal replied with a smile, glad to welcome Will and his son in his spacious beach house.

Hannibal and Clarence had spent all day with Will and Adam that day, the children playing together under the watchful eyes of their fathers, all of them slowly getting to know each other better.

Will nodded softly, taking a sip from his wine, his gaze focused on the distant thoughts in his mind.

He had been surprised with how quickly Adam had adapted to his new surroundings at the beach house, yet with Clarence being a quiet, inquisitive child, much taking after his father, both boys had continued to get along well and soon easily surrendered to the exhaustion of their day full of play time as their bedtime approached.

"Would it be too cliché to say, 'I'm not usually the type to do this'?"

"No," Hannibal smiled, sipping his wine, enjoying the expensive vintage on his tongue, "And even if you were, how would I be in any place to judge you right now, given our mutual situation?"

Will felt a shiver run down his spine as Hannibal’s fingertips slowly and lightly caressed his nape, gently playing with his hair.

He smiled as he turned towards Hannibal, gaze lingering on the older man’s lips.

“You wouldn’t…” Will agreed in merely a whisper, setting down his wine.

Slowly but smoothly he crossed the distance between them, thighs touching as he laid his hands on Hannibal, pulling him into a gentle kiss, tasting the wine on his lips.

Hannibal buried his free hand in Will’s hair, enjoying the sensation of the soft, unruly curls between his fingers, gladly responding in kind as Will deepened their kiss, slowly letting go of his restraint as his hands explored Hannibal’s body.

Hannibal could feel the desire burning right beneath Will's skin, the desperation to touch and be touched, to feel cherished and to connect. To feel like he belonged, even if only for a few hours, absolved of his duties at work, the burden of his ugly divorce, the loneliness he grew increasingly used to.

"You sure you're okay with this, Hannibal…?"

Will's gaze lingered on Hannibal's lips for a moment, a smile playing around his own as he looked into his eyes, feeling comfortable and welcome, the warmth of Hannibal's body against his own as he lay half on top of him.

Hannibal smiled calmly, finally setting aside his wine glass, placing his hand low on Will's back instead.

"Perfectly okay…"

"Good…" Will grinned softly, capturing his lips in another kiss, his fingers slowly busying himself with the buttons of Hannibal's dress shirt.

A shiver ran down Will's spine as he felt Hannibal's hands slide underneath the fabric of his t-shirt in return, the sensation of warm, soft skin to skin finally satisfying the urges and desires he had buried underneath the stress and work of the past few months.

Hannibal pulled him even closer, aligning their hips, making Will moan softly with the pressure and friction he felt with every move of theirs, kissing Hannibal even more longingly now, hot breaths carrying faint sounds of pleasure in the air between them.

Suddenly, Will moved back, cursing under his breath as he grabbed at the back pocket of his trousers, pulling out his vibrating phone.

He took a quick glance at the display, his brows furrowing slightly.

"Do you mind-"

"Not at all," Hannibal interrupted softly, sitting up slightly, watching Will curiously as he answered his call.

"Graham? … No, I'm on vacation right now. It's fine, Price, just tell me what's up…"

Hannibal laid his head to the side, taking in the information that spilled over on Will's side of the phone call.

Police Department.

Will's eyes grew wide, the incredulousness of surprise and shock written all over his face.

"Full or partial? … Where? … Alright, I'll come down to Quantico as soon as I'm back… Yeah, thanks…"

Wolf Trap.

Quantico.

FBI Academy.

Special consultation.

High-profile case.

Will hung up the phone, staring at the device in his hand for a long moment.

Then a hopeful, baffled smile lit up his features, a small chuckle vibrating in the air.

"Fuck, I can't believe it…"

Hannibal smiled graciously, ignoring the other man's profanity.

"Good news?"

"The best," Will agreed, discarding his phone on the coffee table, stealing a quick glance from the baby monitor to make sure the boys were still sleeping.

In an instant, he was back on top of Hannibal, the rush of adrenaline and excitement from their case breakthrough setting his nerves on fire, heart pumping, aching for more, more pleasure, more relief.

"I can't wait to finally put a pair of cuffs on that beast…"

Hannibal could feel the intensity of Will's emotions radiating off of him, carried with every kiss, every touch, every move of his body against him.

"That's not a very nice way to speak to me at all, Will…"

Will laughed softly, teeth gently tugging at Hannibal's lower lip.

"Careful what you wish for, Dr. Lecter…"

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

> Trigger warning for the second part of this chapter for heavily implied child abuse/pedicide. This is briefly mentioned within the context of Will working on a case and is not elaborated upon, neither do these warnings in any way apply to Adam or Clarence. If you wish to skip this part of the chapter, please stop reading after the pillow talk between Hannibal and Will (as also indicated by the broader line spacing in the text).
>
> You will not miss out on any important details for the next chapter by skipping this section. Please always take care of your well-being first and foremost. 🖤

Will's hands were firm on Hannibal's chest as he pushed him down onto the bed, chasing his lips in a breathless, hungry kiss.

Hannibal smiled as he felt Will's hands slowly traveling along his arms, reaching his hands, the hard, cold metal of Will's handcuffs snapping shut around his wrists only a moment later.

Will brought a bit of distance between them, taking in the sight of Hannibal's naked body underneath him, secured to the bed with his cuffs.

"Do you like what you see, Detective?"

Hannibal smiled as he looked at him, a glint of utter satisfaction and amusement in his eyes that Will would remain delightfully oblivious to.

Even after weeks and months of dating, his sweet Will would never guess that the man he had at his mercy, restrained and stripped, was one of the most dangerous and prolific serial killers of their generation.

The man Will was highly aware of, if not actively searching for.

The Chesapeake Ripper.

"I could get used to it…" Will murmured with a grin, leaning down to kiss him, hips grinding against each other.

When Will sat up again he reached for one of the condoms and lube, unrolling the condom and spreading the lube along the length of Hannibal's cock before he finally positioned himself above his hips, his own legs still trembling slightly with the mind-numbing intensity of the stimulation and prep job Hannibal had done on him.

Hannibal moaned deeply, thrusting his hips, savouring the sensation of Will's tight, hot body around him, swallowing him greedily.

Will whimpered softly, scratching over Hannibal's abdomen as he was fully inside, and he couldn't remember the last time he had ever had sex as fulfilling as he did with Hannibal.

Conversations, dinner, intimacy, sex, all of their shared experiences were of the highest, most satisfying intensity he had ever had.

In a way, it felt like Hannibal completed Will in ways he had never allowed himself to ask for, lowering his expectations for the sake of avoiding loneliness.

With Hannibal, he never had to compromise, always feeling like Hannibal knew better what he wanted, what he *needed*, than Will even knew himself.

Hannibal's eyes slowly wandered over Will's body as he moved, muscles tense, skin glowing with sweat, thighs quivering slightly with the unrelenting pace he had picked up.

The cuffs left indents on Hannibal's skin as he pulled at them harder, moving his hips to match Will's rhythm, aching to feel his skin beneath his fingers again.

Will's nails dug harder into Hannibal's skin, a frustrated groan leaving his lips as he heard his phone vibrating on the nightstand, unable to ignore it as it kept on ringing.

Will slowed down his pace, panting and painfully close, until he came to sit on Hannibal's hips, pawing at his phone until his trembling fingers managed to grab a hold of it.

"Graham…?"

Hannibal suppressed a grin at the thought of the face of the person at the other end of the line, being greeted with a voice so hoarse and breathy, saturated with the height of arousal.

"This better be important-... *Yes*, I'm *busy*, just get to the point-..."

Will slowly caught his breath, licking his lips as he listened, hips slowly swaying on their own accord, desperate to focus on Hannibal again rather than work.

"Got it. I'll see you there…"

Will hung up the phone and threw it aside, leaning over Hannibal to apologise for his rude interruption with a deep, longing kiss, slowly picking up their former pace again.

Hannibal gently bit at his lip, a small, yet ultimately harmless punishment for their intrusion, before Will sat up again, finally releasing the built-up tension between them with a few fast, hard snaps of his hips, riding Hannibal to completion as he came all over his chest.

Will supported himself on the mattress, taking a moment to catch his breath, hovering over Hannibal before he leaned in closer again, kissing him slowly and softly.

Finally, he reached for the small set of keys, unlocking the cuffs and discarding them on the night table, still continuing to kiss and caress Hannibal for the discomfort he had endured.

Carefully, Will adjusted his hips, allowing for Hannibal to safely dispose of the condom, finding himself in the older man's arms only a few moments later.

"Is everything okay, Will?"

Will nodded quietly, finally thinking clearly enough to think back to his phone call.

"They moved a court date. I'll have to show up there tomorrow, rather than the day after…"

Hannibal nodded softly.

"You know Adam is welcome to stay with Clarence and I until you return."

Will sighed with relief, eternally grateful for the selfless help of the man he couldn't help but develop much deeper, more intense feelings for than just the vacation crush they had started out as.

"Thank you, Hannibal…"

-

When Will returned to pick up Adam the next day at Hannibal's house, it was by far the worst condition he had ever seen the detective in.

"The whole case got thrown out on a *fucking* technicality-!!"

Will dry-heaved as he slammed his bag full of documents down on the kitchen counter, feeling the wrath burning in his bones, stinging in his eyes, numbing his body with the unbearable, crushing weight of being helpless and useless.

"I can't-..."

Will pressed his hands to his face, haunted and heartbroken by the faces of the victims he had failed that day.

Faces that resembled those of their own children playing next door far, far too much.

"I need to step outside for a minute, I don't want Adam to see me like this-... Could you-...?"

"Of course, Will," Hannibal returned calmly, "Whatever you need."

"Thank you-..."

Will nodded faintly, quickly but quietly made his way outside to the garden, out of sight and earshot of the kids.

Hannibal looked after him for a moment, still and quiet.

When he was sure Will would not return quite so soon, he focused his attention on the stack of papers and manila folders in Will’s bag.

He slipped into a pair of gloves from his kitchen drawer, his fingers gently darting out, adjusting one of the folders so he could carefully leaf through it, share in the pictures, reports and evidence, the reason for Will's unusual, yet very appropriate outburst of emotions.

A name, and a face.

It was all he would need.

Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“So? What do you think, Graham?”

Will slowly opened his eyes again, allowing the noise of the crime scene around him to reach him again, reality pooling around his ankles like waves at the shore as his gaze still lingered on the victim and the elaborate tableau before him.

He was staring right at the face of the man who had evaded justice merely a week ago, a case on which Will had been working on for months thrown out on a technicality, much to his utter frustration and anger.

"Get Crawford. Have him come down here."

Will stepped back, crossing the line of tape, pulling the gloves off his hands as he looked at the dead body one last, final time.

Everything about him, about the way he had been gutted and presented, the mockery that had been made of his death, shaming him for all the world to see - it all so painfully obviously carried the signature of the Chesapeake Ripper.

"It's him."

-

When Hannibal returned to his home that night, he was surprised to find the house veiled in darkness, alarmed by the absence of Clarence’s usually so sweet and warm greeting of his father upon his return.

As he illuminated the hallway and living area, it was Detective Will Graham he found instead, calmly seated in one of Hannibal’s arm chairs.

“Will.” Hannibal’s voice was calm and smooth as ever, yet there was just a hint of tightness to it, a tension yet unrelieved upon the ambiguous situation he had come home to. “I did not expect to see you tonight.”

“I figured.”

Will’s expression was quiet and stern, gone the beautiful smile and bright eyes that Hannibal had come to adore so deeply.

“Where is Clarence?”

“He’s with Adam. They’re safe.”

From you.

Hannibal could feel Will's unspoken words linger in the air between them, every step they took now felt like moving on thin ice, groaning and cracking under their weight, icy waters and darkness threatening to swallow them as soon as one of them stepped out of line.

"You've always been honest with me, Hannibal."

"Yes," Hannibal replied calmly, watching Will as he approached him.

"Then I do ask that you are honest with me now, too. When I came to your house, after that court date a week ago… when I left my files with you, unsupervised for several minutes. Did you touch them? Did you look through them?"

Will stood before him now, not breaking eye contact, intently focused on the smallest, faintest of Hannibal's expressions.

"Yes, I did."

Will exhaled calmly, staying perfectly still while every nerve inside of him screamed in agony, his stomach twisting and turning painfully.

"Did you kill him?"

Will felt his heartbeat hammer in his ears, drumming so loudly he felt like he would barely be able to hear Hannibal's reply.

"Is that really what you would like to ask me, Will?"

Will let out a shaky breath, hands trembling slightly as the beautiful future he had hoped to have with Hannibal slipped from his grasp.

"No…"

The detective let a beat pass between them, gaze still fixed on Hannibal, his voice as calm and smooth as he felt he could muster.

"Hannibal… It's you, isn't it? The Chesapeake Ripper…"

Hannibal reached out to him, gently resting his hand at the back of Will's nape, like he had that night months ago at the beach house.

A gentle smile pulled at the corners of his lips, meeting Will's heightened anxiety with calmness.

"Wrong question…"

Will froze as Hannibal leaned in closer, his other arm wrapped around Will's waist, pulling him closer against his body, lips almost touching as Will silently released the safety catch of his gun.

Will kept his hand on his gun, frozen and incapable of doing what he needed to do, what he had set out to do that evening, and he hated himself for how easily he gave in, how blissful he felt the moment Hannibal's lips touched his own, savouring the moment that should be a final goodbye between them.

"Why…?"

It was all Will could bring forward, trying to keep the betrayal, the disappointment and heartbreak from spilling into the world through the tears in his eyes.

Hannibal's thumb gently grazed his cheek.

"It was my gift for you, Will."

Will's eyes widened in shock and disbelief, staring at Hannibal incredulously.

Hannibal smiled, caressing him, not allowing his own feelings of loss to mingle with that of his beloved detective.

"I have seen how hard you worked this case, and I've seen how much it destroyed you to see him walk away a free man. I read and saw what he had done, and I decided to give you peace. Now, tell me, Will. Would you still have me be the monster in this scenario?"

Will clenched his teeth so hard his jaw ached, staring back at the man who had given not only him, but also Adam something they had both missed in the last few months before they met - a home.

Family.

Love.

Safety.

Looking at Hannibal now, and seeing only the features of his lover, but not the faceless, sadistic and intelligent psychopath Will had been hunting for years…

It was simply unbearable.

Gently but firmly Hannibal replaced Will's hand on his gun with his own, engaging the safety once more.

"I will give you a rare gift, Will. I will give you a chance to walk away. Yet if you choose to stay, I can do nothing but assure you that neither you, nor the prospect of raising our beautiful, sweet sons will deter me from the life I lead."

For the first time since he had met him Will could see feelings of hurt in Hannibal's eyes, be they mirrored or his own, and he couldn't help but hold onto him more tightly.

He saw Hannibal's future before him, saw the way Clarence would be ripped from his only family first by law, then death, a future forever tainted by the legacy of his father.

It was then that Will knew.

He knew he couldn’t take his father away from Clarence.

And he couldn’t forsake the feelings shared with the human monster in his arms.

The motions of Will’s hands were rough and violent, frustration and anger, passion and heartbreak uniting in the way he touched Hannibal, held him, kissed him until he could no longer breathe.

Will's voice was quiet and hoarse in the air between them, acceptance and defeat, love and hatred tangling in his chest until he could no longer pull apart the strings.

“Next time… you don’t work these cases behind my back, Hannibal… I’ll help guide your hand…”

Chapter End Notes

One day I will learn how to write something fluffy and just let it be, and not make it dark, dramatic and angsty.

Today was not that day.

Thank you so much for reading!

ira x

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